

Podcast 162 – Time Zones in Australia

Learn English while learning about daily life in Australia, with Rob McCormack

Podcast Number 162 – Time Zones in Australia

<https://traffic.libsyn.com/secure/slowenglish/podcast162.mp3>

(This podcast is 11 minutes and 37 seconds long.)

Hi,

Australia's mainland is about 4000 kilometres across from east to west. It's a wide land. I am reminded of how wide it is whenever I fly from Melbourne to Perth to visit my relatives in Western Australia. The plane journey takes around 4 hours. The large distance from east to west means that Australia has 3 main time zones. This can create some issues for Australians who travel a lot, and also for those whose businesses operate in both east and west. In this podcast, I would like to talk about our different time zones and how our use of daylight-saving time complicates the situation.

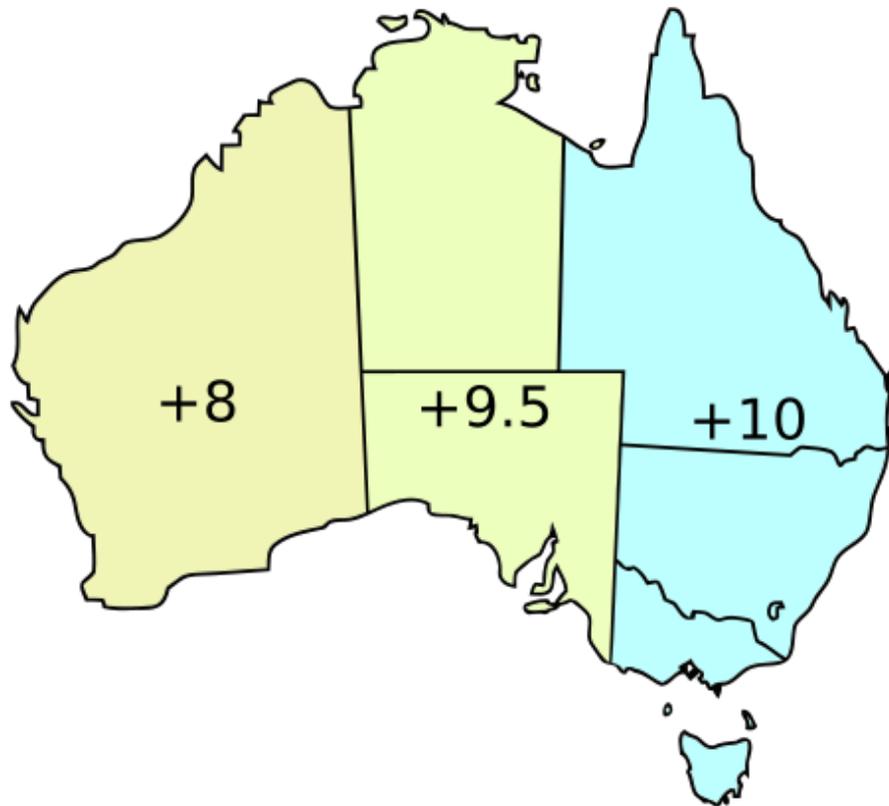
Time zones are based on UTC time, which stands for Universal Time Coordinated. UTC is the international standard used to divide the world into different time zones. For a particular place on earth, it refers to the time difference in hours compared to the time at the 0 degrees longitudinal line, which passes through the Greenwich Observatory near London in England.

In Australia, our 3 main time zones are:

- *Australian Eastern Standard Time* (UTC + 10.00), which covers the eastern side of Australia, covering the largest populated areas including the states of

Queensland, New South Wales, Victoria and Tasmania.

- *Australian Central Standard Time* (UTC + 9.30), which covers South Australia and the Northern Territory.
- *Australian Western Standard Time* (UTC + 8.00), which covers Western Australia.



Australia's 3 main standard time zones.

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/0/0b/Australia-Timezones-Standard.svg>

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There are several other time zones operating in the island territories of Australia. Examples include Norfolk Island (UTC + 11.00) which lies around 1400km east of Australia and Christmas Island (UTC + 7.00) which lies around 1500km west of Australia. However, in this podcast I will only talk about Australia's 3 main time zones. (For a fuller explanation of all Australia's time zones, you could visit

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Time_in_Australia.)

Looking at these time zones, you can see that there is 2 hours difference between eastern Australian time, say Melbourne and Sydney with UTC + 10.00, and Western Australia, say Perth with UTC + 8.00. So, in my home in Melbourne, I am always two hours further into the day compared to those living in Perth.

I originally come from Western Australia and still have extended family members who live there. When I want to call them for a chat, I need to be aware that is it 2 hours earlier where they are. It's no good ringing them at 8.00am, as they will probably still be asleep in Perth, where it will be 6.00am – not a great time to ring them.

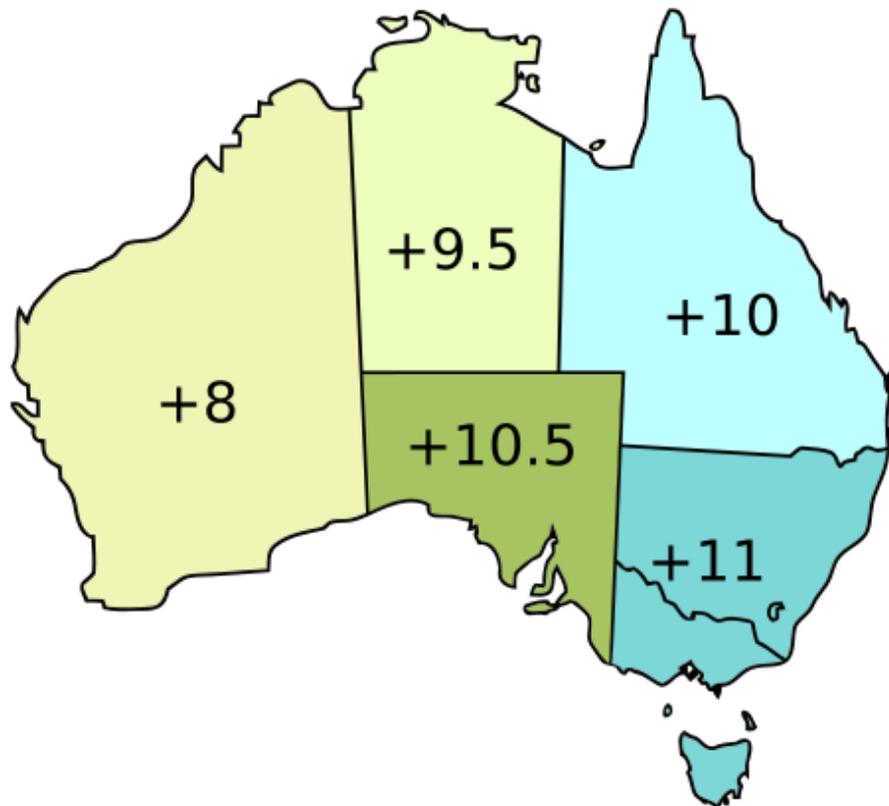
Our time zones create some interesting situations. For example, when you have a national business operating everywhere in Australia, this means you have to take account of time zone differences. When operating a customer phone-in centre say in Melbourne for a national business, you need to provide a service which takes account of the later start, and later finish, to the Western Australian business day. No doubt these differences increase the cost of running a national business in Australia but that's just the way it is.

National sporting competitions are also affected. Our Australian Football League (AFL) has teams from states across Australia and games are played in every capital city. However, it's no good planning to play a game starting at say 8pm in Perth. Most of the television audience will be in the eastern states, where the live televised game would start at 10pm – much too late. Accordingly, games played in Western Australia start no later than 6.10pm local time, to ensure the eastern states television audiences can watch it live starting at 8.10pm, their local time.

Another problem is jet lag for those travelling frequently by plane across Australia. I experience this when travelling from Melbourne to Perth. After arriving in Perth, my day has

gone backwards by 2 hours. My first night's sleep in Western Australia is always disturbed. I find I always wake up on Melbourne time – 2 hours early, usually at around 4.30am. Most always I can't get back to sleep. It usually takes me a week or more to get my body clock working on local Western Australian time. Then when I finally return to Melbourne, I have the same temporary problem, but in reverse.

To further complicate our time zone issues, we have daylight saving in some states of Australia during the summer months. Western Australia, Queensland and the Northern Territory have decided not to have daylight saving, whereas New South Wales, Victoria, Tasmania and South Australia do have it. On the first Sunday in October each year, these states put their clocks forward by 1 hour. On the first Sunday in April, they turn it back one hour to go back to standard time. While daylight saving is operating, Western Australia then becomes 3 hours behind Melbourne and Sydney, while Queensland becomes 1 hour behind. You can imagine that this creates further problems for national businesses in Australia. Likewise, plane travellers now have a 3-hour difference to cope with when they are travelling from Melbourne or Sydney to Western Australia, and vice versa.



Australia's Time Zones During Daylight Saving in Summer.

<https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/40/Australia-Timezones-Daylight.svg>

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However, I think these time zone issues from daylight saving are relatively minor problems. I enjoy daylight saving because it means we have more natural light until well after 9pm. This allows people to enjoy barbeques, evening walks and other outdoor activities well into the evening. On balance, I think the time zones we have in Australia are not major problems and are just a feature of living in a large country like Australia.

If you have a question or comment to make, please leave it in the comments box at the bottom of this page. Or, you can send me an email at rob@slowenglish.info. I would love to hear from you. Tell me where you live, a little bit about yourself

and what you think of my Slow English podcast. I will write back to you, in English of course. If you would like to take a short quiz to see if you have understood this podcast, you will also find it on my website. Goodbye until next time.

Rob

Podcast 162 Quiz - Did you understand the podcast?

You can take the quiz as many times as you like.

[Start quiz](#)

Vocabulary

- Play accordingly = as a result, where something happens because of another event
- Play competitions = when teams or single people try to win in a game or sport
- Play complicates = makes it more difficult to understand
- Play cope with = to be able to do something even though it is hard
- Play create = make
- Play daylight-saving = used in summer, when clocks are put forward by 1 hour.
- Play difference = when two things are not the same
- Play distance = how far it is from one place to another
- Play ensure = to make sure something happens
- Play extended family = those members of your family other

than you parents, brothers and sisters

□ Play feature = a characteristic, a part of something which you can't change

□ Play frequently = often

□ Play Greenwich Observatory = a place where scientists who study the earth and stars work

□ Play international standard = used by all countries to compare to

□ Play journey = a trip

□ Play live televised = when something can be seen on television as it actually happens (live)

□ Play longitudinal = are lines drawn on a map from the North Pole to the South Pole

□ Play main = the most important

□ Play mainland = not including any islands

□ Play natural light = the light that comes from the sun

□ Play operate = are working

□ Play originally = some time ago, in the past

□ Play particular = when talking about one thing or group of things

□ Play populated = means a place has people living there

□ Play provide = give

□ Play refers = points to, means

□ Play relatively = compared to something else

□ Play relatives = the people who are in my extended (large)

family

□ Play reminded of = when I remember something because I saw or heard something else

□ Play situation = how things are at a particular time

□ Play take account of = to consider something when making a decision